



# 2004: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

AGRICULTURE

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

EDUCATION

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

**Congressman Gil Gutknecht**

ECONOMIC GROWTH

SECURITY

**First District, Minnesota**

CONSERVATION

ENERGY

**December 2004**

TELECOMMUNICATION

BUDGET

TAXES

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

VETERANS

TRANSPORTATION

VALUES

Congressman Gutknecht speaks about the economy at the groundbreaking for Windom Telecommunications as part of his 2004 'Jobs Tour'.

Dear Friends,

A look back at the second session of the 108th Congress reveals a steady load of work and some tough decisions for Minnesota's First District. I want to share with you the following list of votes from this year that I think were important.

I hope you will take the time to review this information and, as always, contact me with feedback.

I look forward to hearing from you as we get ready for a productive 2005!

Sincerely,



# HOW I VOTED

supported

## TAX RELIEF

The House passed several important tax relief measures, including making marriage penalty relief permanent, extending the child tax credit and creating a new 10-percent tax bracket that lowers taxes on low-income Americans. I believe people can better spend their money than Washington bureaucrats.

*(HR 4182, passed the House 323-95, April 29, 2004; HR 4359, passed the House 271-139, May 20, 2004; HR 4275, passed the House 344-76, May 13, 2004)*

co-sponsored

## PENSION PROTECTION

H.AMDT.765 – This amendment would have prohibited the federal government from assisting in overturning the ruling for the plaintiffs in the *IBM v. Cooper* case. The U.S. District Court ruled that IBM unfairly altered the retirement benefits of their employees. Companies should offer their vested employees a choice between staying in their old plan or switching to a new plan when they change pension plan structures.

*(HAmtd 765, passed the House, 237-162, Sep. 21, 2004)*

opposed

## TRANSPORTATION BILL

The Transportation Equity Act would provide \$284 billion in new taxpayer dollars for transportation projects. There were more than 3,000 earmark projects. These "special projects" across the country cut the total dollars available. Minnesota would have seen a dramatic drop in the percentage of gas taxes returned to our state.

*(HR 3550 passed the House, 357-65, April 2, 2004)*

supported

## ENERGY BILL

The Energy Policy Act would update our national energy policy. This bill reinforces the importance of renewable energy to Minnesota and our need for a comprehensive energy strategy. It included:

- a renewable fuel standard for annual use over the next ten years;
- a tax credit through 2006 for electricity produced from wind energy, biomass, landfill gas and trash combustion facilities;
- a biodiesel tax credit; and
- a small ethanol producers tax credit.

*(HR 4503, passed the House 244-178, June 15, 2004)*

supported

## JOB CREATION

The American Jobs Creation Act would end World Trade Organization sanctions on U.S. products, reduce the corporate tax rate by 3 percent. It encourages companies to invest in American jobs with numerous tax benefits. There were several energy provisions, such as a tax credit for ethanol and biodiesel production, and an expansion of the Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit.

*(HR 4520 passed the House, 251-178, June 17, 2004)*

supported

## MARRIAGE PROTECTION

The Marriage Protection Amendment would define marriage as between one man and one woman.

*(HJRes 106 failed in the House, 227-186, September 30, 2004. Constitutional amendments need two-thirds of the vote, or 290 votes, to pass.)*

supported

## SPENDING CONTROL

The Spending Control Act would have restored fiscal responsibility in Congress by reinstating PAYGO (pay-as-you-go) rules and spending caps to control federal spending. As a senior member of the Budget Committee, I secured a commitment to bring this debate to the House floor.

*(HR 4663 failed in the House, 146-268, June 25, 2004)*



*Left page:* Congressman Gutknecht meets with local officials in Austin to talk about flood control and discusses farm policy along with Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman at Farm Fest in Redwood Falls.

*Right page:* Congressman Gutknecht talks about his duties as a Representative with elementary students in Glenville and discusses health care issues with Sleepy Eye residents after presenting a USDA check for the hospital.

# AND WHY...

*supported*  
**9/11 BILL**

The 9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act was an important step in strengthening our intelligence capabilities, borders and immigration policy and our ability to find and prosecute terrorists.

*(HR 10 passed the House, 282-134, October 8, 2004)*

*supported*  
**APPROPRIATIONS**

The Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act is the omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2005. The measure is the tightest federal budget in the past four years. It complies with the spending targets agreed to by the House and the Administration.

*(HR 4818 passed the House, 344-51, November 20, 2004)*

*supported*  
**BROADCAST DECENCY**

The Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act would strengthen already existing FCC regulations against indecency on broadcast television by authorizing fines up to \$500,000 for each violation. This measure shows a commitment to upholding the standards of common decency for our families and children.

*(HR 3737 passed the House, 391-22, March 11, 2004)*

*supported*  
**PLEDGE PROTECTION**

The Pledge Protection Act of 2004 would not allow federal courts or any appellate jurisdiction to the Supreme Court from hearing or deciding any case involving the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance. On June 26, 2002, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruled the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Congress must return to its role as a check on runaway courts.

*(HR 2028 passed the House, 247-173, September 23, 2004)*

*opposed*  
**AUSTRALIA TRADE DEAL**

The Australia Free Trade Agreement provides access to both the U.S. and Australia markets regarding agriculture and manufacturing. This measure prevents American consumers from accessing affordable prescription drugs from Australia. This sets a dangerous precedent.

*(HR 4759 passed the House, 314-109, July 14, 2004)*

*supported*  
**TORT REFORM**

The Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-Cost, Timely Healthcare Act (HEALTH) would eliminate frivolous lawsuits, which lead to higher insurance premiums and costs to small businesses and health care providers. Tort reform, together with making pharmaceuticals more affordable, will go a long way toward reducing health care costs.

*(HR 4280 passed the House, 229-197, May 12, 2004)*

*supported*  
**LACI PETERSON LAW**

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act provides that if an unborn child is injured or killed during a federal crime of violence, prosecutors can bring two charges: one on behalf of the mother, one on behalf of the unborn victim.

*(HR 1997 passed the House, 254-163, February 26, 2004; signed into law by President Bush, April 4, 2004)*

More information can be found at  
**[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.gil.house.gov](http://www.gil.house.gov).**



Left photo: Congressman Gutknecht visits about health care costs at Madonna Towers in Rochester.

Right photo: Congressman Gutknecht talks about the economy at Cenex Harvest States in Fairmont.



# STAY CONNECTED...

## Radio Shows

Congressman Gutknecht's **radio show**, "Conversations with the Congressman" is a weekly program featuring an update on the week's activities, interesting guests and your chance to call in with questions about the issues important to you. Conversations will resume January 14, 2005. Contact the Rochester office or visit [www.gil.house.gov](http://www.gil.house.gov) to find the list of stations and show times for your listening area. Shows are also posted on the web site.

## Offices

### Washington Office

425 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202.225.2472

### Rochester Office

1530 Greenview Drive SW, Suite 108  
Rochester, MN 55902  
507.252.9841 or 800.862.8632

### Fairmont Office

109 East 2nd Street  
Fairmont, MN 56035  
507.238.2835

### Online

[gil@mail.house.gov](mailto:gil@mail.house.gov)  
[www.gil.house.gov](http://www.gil.house.gov)

## The E-Line

Congressman Gutknecht's **E-Line** is a weekly report via your e-mail on all the activities in Washington and Minnesota. It includes details on important votes, interesting news articles and the latest photos from Gil's meetings and visits with constituents. Sign up at [www.gil.house.gov](http://www.gil.house.gov) to receive your copy of the E-Line every Friday afternoon.



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